

Blue Star Programme 2016/17 Update, June 2017

- 161 schools have registered for the Programme, with at least 1 school from every county in the country for the third year in a row.
 - Of the 161 registered schools, 88 are repeat schools and 73 are first-time schools – striking a good balance.
 - Counties with particular high participation (Dublin, Cork Clare, Galway, Roscommon) and with relatively low participation (Carlow, Cavan, Louth, Offaly) were mentioned.
 - So far this year, there have been 18 school VIP visits with 27 visitors (Ministers, Ambassadors, MEPs, Members of the Oireachtas, etc.), including 8 first-time school visits. EM Ireland is aware of 9 more scheduled VIP visits, with even more expected around Europe Day.
 - So far this year, 5 local/regional newspapers have reported on a Blue Star Programme event; the Irish Independent has reported twice on a Blue Star Programme event; RTÉ's *News2Day* has done 1 recording of a Blue Star Programme event, with another lined up for Europe Day.
- Continued strong media interest is important for promoting the Programme.
- European Parliament Information Office hosted the Teacher Training Workshop in February, included participation by Mairead McGuinness MEP and Lynn Boylan MEP.
 - The Blue Star Programme regional launch took place on 3 March in Berrings NS in Co. Cork with Minister Dara Murphy and Deirdre Clune MEP. The Irish Independent reported on the event.
 - The Blue Star Programme national launch took place on 21 March in Government Buildings with the Taoiseach, Minister Flanagan, Minister Dara Murphy, the heads of the European Commission representation and the European Parliament Information Office, and pupils from St Vincent's GNS in Dublin. The 6 Ambassadors of the Treaty of Rome signatory countries also took part in the context of the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which is the civic society element of the Programme this year.
 - The new feature on social media – the Blue Star Programme *One A Week*, has received a very good response, as has the new page on the Blue Star Programme website, *Kids' Corner*, which encourages interaction directly with the pupils.
 - The Blue Star Programme and Handshake for Europe are featured in *Super Sleuth D*, a primary school maths textbook published by Gill Education.
 - Europe Day Blue Star Programme and Handshake for Europe event took place on Tuesday 9 May, in Iveagh House, hosted by Minister Charles Flanagan. Two Blue Star Programme schools, Askeaton Senior National School from Co. Limerick and Scoil Realt na Mara from Co. Clare were awarded with a specially-commissioned trophy to mark their 5 years of participation in the Programme.. RTÉ's *News2Day* filmed and broadcast the event to feature on the TV show on Europe Day, Tuesday 9 May. <http://www.rte.ie/player/ie/show/news2day-30001385/10723969/>